

Concerned Moravians Meeting
Nov 4, 2018 at New Philadelphia Moravian Church

Background/Activities

Here is what happens when you join forces with a group of Christians who share your concerns about a serious issue that, we as Concerned Moravians, believe has eternal consequences--you get a grassroots movement---just ordinary people who love the Lord, who affirm the authority of scripture, and feel some leaders in our Moravian Church have lost sight of the authority of scripture as it relates to human sexuality, and are really concerned that these actions have created, and are creating, major division in the Moravian Church.

Prior to July 1: How did we go from marriage is between a man and a woman for 2000 years, to a resolution from Synod 2018 that instructs individual churches to decide for themselves whether to accept same sex marriages in the church and can also affirm gay clergy if pastors and boards agree. I have to say here that the CM are not gay haters, we are not homophobic, we are not trying to keep gays from the Moravian Church, we are accepting of everyone! The beginning of the Concerned Moravians group was started as a small group of believers, beginning around June 2018, who began to gather information and to become educated about the actions taken by the PEC and others before and during Synod to determine what happened for the Synod to churn out Resolution 14.

July 1: 1st meeting was with a small group of like minds from RHMC at the Tayloe's home. This meeting included Cindy Morgan (Fairview) who had schooled herself in the Church

Order of the Moravian Church (COUF). Since the same sex issue had been argued at Synod, it was determined that our approach would be to contest resolutions passed by the 2018 Southern Province Synod which are non-compliant with the SP's own "Book of Order" and also non-compliant with the "Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum (COUF).

July 7: A meeting was held at Fairview Moravian Church, hosted by Cindy Morgan to share information obtained regarding Synod. Fairview and Rural Hall were the only churches represented at that meeting, and it was a start. Cindy had composed a petition letter addressing the non compliance of resolution 14 with the Southern Province's own Book of Order and the Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum. There were signature sheets available for those individuals to sign who were in agreement with the need to fight against this non-compliance in our own church orders. **Note:** There were numerous edits to that letter as we went along, but we finally accomplished that and the letter has seen no changes.

July 21: The 2nd meeting at the Tayloe's brought 20 people and 5 churches represented. The final letter and signature sheets were distributed at that meeting with a target date to return signatures by September 1 (turned out to be later for signature collection). The plan was to present to the PEC and Unity Board the signatures prior to the Unity Board meeting in Winston-Salem scheduled from September 10-14.

August 9: The PEC begun to take notice of this grassroots movement **and a meeting with CM was requested by the PEC.** A small group of 6 Concerned Moravians met with the PEC and submitted the letter (with no signatures) to the PEC. The CM group was told at that time **that they had what was needed and to stop collecting signatures...we didn't.**

August 14: In an August 14 email to Dick Joyce from David Guthrie, David **then stated** that the PEC wants the signed signature sheets. By this time, we are only 2 weeks into signature collection. Are you seeing a pattern here?

August 19: A meeting of CM was held at Carl and Gladys Stimpson's home with at 24 in attendance and 5 churches represented. Dick Joyce had received an email from David Guthrie prior to this meeting reiterating what was told at the meeting of August 9 with the PEC. Dick shared this at the meeting. There was discussion at this meeting of ways to promote our petition to other churches and spread the word. **At this point there are 300+ signatures.** An appeal was made to keep getting more and more signatures.

August 30: The Concerned Moravians received a letter from David Guthrie stating that **we should conclude gathering signatures and deliver those signatures to the PEC.** He cautioned against us making a direct appeal to the Unity Board about our concerns but to follow the COUF guidelines #601 **and make our appeal to the PEC instead.** By this time, we **were only 30 days into obtaining signatures,** and wanted to give ourselves as much time as possible to collect as many as possible.

September 3: On September 3, the **petition letter** was sent to the Unity Board by CM, copied to the PEC, and **was followed on September 8 by 700+ signatures, representing 27 churches.**

September 10-14: The Unity Board was scheduled to meet in Winston-Salem from September 10-14, but Hurricane Florence had other ideas, and the Unity Board members were bused to Pennsylvania to complete their meeting. Our friend, Dick Joyce had been working double time to get an audience with Jorgen Boytler, UB Administrator and Cortroy Jarvis, UB President so we could voice our concerns about the 2018 Synod in person, **even though we had been advised against doing that.** This was the perfect opportunity with the Unity Board present in our own town, and **one we felt we could not pass up!** There were so many irregularities at Synod that we were concerned about, such as voting irregularities (as in 5 finger voting) in committee, moving to unlimited terms for the PEC President, the increase of voting rights of employees of the Southern Province, and other concerns, that we were compelled to have an audience with the Unity board.

October 8: Again, our friend, Brother Dick Joyce kept at it, and Jorgen Boytler agreed to come to Winston-Salem and meet with a small contingent of Concerned Moravians. He was sympathetic to our issues and concerns, but made it clear that **our path was thru the PEC and to follow the process outlined in COUF #601.**

October 29: Concerned Moravians received another communication just a few days ago from David Guthrie reiterating the process for groups such as CM to appeal a decision of a Provincial Synod “as stated in the Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum.”

#601. In the case of the Provinces governed by a Synod, the individual members, congregations, institutions and boards shall have the right of appeal to their Provincial Board. The final court of appeal in these cases shall be their Provincial Synod. (That means 4 more years, and none of us think the MC will survive, as we know it today, for that length of time.)

In DG's letter, **he requests again the petition letter and accompanying signatures.** At that point, they will consider it to be an appeal to the PEC. They will then respond and **we would be able to decide whether we accept that response, or wish to make a further appeal to a Provincial Synod.**

He indicates that since we did not formally deliver our petition to the PEC but copied them on a September 9 email to the Unity Board, they will consider this the final version of the petition unless we advise otherwise.

We will, within a few days, respond back to the PEC with the petition letter (which has not changed since the August 9 meeting requested by the PEC, and which they have had in their possession all this time, and the signature pages, (which now number 918 signatures), and will request the PEC to get back to us by a certain date in the very near future.

We are, and have been, working hard on behalf of all Concerned Moravians. You all have been hard at work too collecting signatures and sharing the word with those that would listen, and we owe you our heartfelt thanks. It is our prayer now that those of you that can will step forward with your time and talents to help fight the good fight. We don't know the direction the good fight will take just yet,

but should know in the near future and will keep you informed.